Words are not Enough

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Words are not Enough

by Aerosol

Summary

It's Valentine's Day. Hannibal has a special gift for Will but before he can give it to him, they come into conflict with each other and Will storms out the door. Hannibal is left alone and has to think. Hurt feelings, yearning, drama, an angry Will and a jealous Hannibal - Be my guest ;)

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

What is left

The wine Hannibal had selected for the evening, was of very noble, full-bodied anchestry.

He had bought it at a tasting on a French winery 20 years ago and had kept waiting all this time to let it mature in his pantry. Preserved and saved for a special occasion, no need to waste the expensive drops for an ordinary trifle or a friendly dinner with Jack Crawford. It was a Château d'Arcole Saint-Emilion Grand Cru and today was the day on which he had wanted to drink this wine . In order to celebrate something. For a moment, which should be the most glorious moment of his entire life. His consummated triumph. The victory of a war, a vast array of specially matched battles. Winning a game he had played with marked cards. And Will had occupied a not being underestimated leading role in this. This day should have been only for the two of them. Both at the table, moving in their chairs next to each other, body and spirit side by side, awaiting expectantly and relaxed. The glow from the crackling fireplace reflected orange-red on the wine bottle, as Hannibal uncorked it with a rich pop. He poured two glasses, watching in mild fascination as the blood-red bouquet of the liquid covered the transparent bottoms. He led one of them to his lips. The heavy aroma of plum and dark berries unfolded, tingling on his tongue. A touch of liquorice drew after it immediately and gave the taste a lightness that took some of its predominant focus. Outside the rain knocked with wet knuckles on house walls and roof tiles. Except for the glowing fireplace and a candle that threw flickering shadows in the middle of the table, the room was plunged into unbroken darkness. Hannibal took another sip of the wine, then set it slowly back on the smooth polished oak wood panel, leaned back slightly and folded his hands in his lap. His gaze fell into the void. The room remained silent. The chair next to him was empty.

Will was not here.

When Hannibal gave it right, he would have never imagined that Will would make his threat actually true someday, and leave him.

Somehow, the possibility had never appeared to him. An idiocy, a fantasy, embedded in words without meaning, filled with not more than dissipated anger and confusion. He had never taken it seriously. He had not spent so much time at creating a mutual dependence between them and maintain it till the end to worry about such things. One which end time only he knew and should determine, not the other way around.

Now that he thought about it, he saw the signs that could have predicted him this evening's course. He found them all. They had settled in the lower layers of his memory like weed. He had a good memory, an *excellent*memory. It was a blessing and a curse in equal measure. Today, he tended more likely to call it a curse. And it even surprised him that pain could inflict him so long after past events. Of course he had treated and seen it frequently by patients with post-traumatic stress disorders, observed the delusions they endured. A kind of anxiety and guilt that choked their throats and pressed out tears. But he had found this kind of phenomena be incompatible with his own personality and worldview. He was no one who felt generally coerced with guilt or even regret. He harbored no remorse when he captured people

like animals and used their organs for delicacies. He did not fear death. Neither his, nor the one he brought others. Murder meant nothing entirely cruel to him - he felt it rather as occasional necessity in most cases. There were definitely people that had earned the *privilege* to be gutted like cattle, because their life was not good for anything else and their unmannerly rudeness put a distinctive spike in the trained eye of the psychiatrist. For Hannibal Lecter, most people were fattening pigs that had broken from their stables with their greedy snouts rooting in foreign trash that did not concern them personally. Disgusting, persevering, curious pigs like Freddie Lounds, for example.

He had thought Will would not blame him for finally processing this unbearable woman into what she considered to be since their first meeting - the crowning feast of their Valentine's Day dinner. Tongue in madeira. A recipe of South American cuisine.
Today was Valentine's Day. Seven o'clock in the evening. And Hannibal ate the tongue alone. Took small, slow bites. He had no reason to hurry up, because nothing else was waiting for him. *No one* else.Three hours agohehad seenWillgoout the door,thebag he usuallyusedfor hislectures at the university carrying over his shoulder,vigorously hitting againsthishipbone at each step he took.Judging by thebulgeWillhadrandomlypackedall sorts ofbelongingsandhad,driven byhisself-righteousanger, raceddown the stairs.Hannibalhad suspectedhe would find a smallchaos in their bedroom, decorated withtorndrawers,rummaged cabinetdrawersand clothes sprayedon the floor.And hisideawasconfirmed by aquarter of an hourlaterafterhis cursoryinspection.

Well, he was rarely wrong.

Hannibal chewed the meat, but when he swallowed it, he almost felt the need to spit out again. It did not taste nearly as good as he had hoped, and the spices that had unfolded like buds in his mouth otherwise were suddenly bland and stale, disenchanted. After a brave period of about six minutes Hannibal finally gave up, pinning the fork with a faint clink on the porcelain plate and pushed it a few inches away from him with one hand. A demonstration of his disgust. He had not even eaten half of the tongue. His eyes fell on the blood-red juice it basked in, focused on the fleshy tip peering suggestively out of the lake. It seemed to him as Freddie Lounds would even play him an offensively derisive gesture from beyond her grave.

Why all alone, Doctor Lecter? Did your dog bit through his leash?

This voice came as from a hidden distance up to him. It echoed clearly in his ears and he felt something rise up in himself, horribly close to the feeling of hatred. But he pulled it out of his thoughts quickly, and he pulled out the voice too, got up and hurried to clear the table and take the dishes to the kitchen. He took the still half full bottle of wine and poured the last bit of liquid into the sink. Supporting his arms on the kitchen bar and a little bent forward he looked thoughtfully in how the wine flowed into the sink's abyss in fine rivulets and gurgling coarsely. When he closed his eyes and concentrated, he could hear it almost screaming as it sank into its depths. Then, a lip-smacking, like that of a beast that feasted on fresh carrion found its way into the kitchen and filled Hannibal's perception for a few, blissful moments

completely. The brown in his eyes, however, had dyed to coal, the pupils were dull and aligned in dusty marbles. His mouth was barely hinted by a stroke of almost forcibly pressed lips.

Hannibal had also never imagined that an emotional bottleneck would actually spoil his appetite one day. Or that he would not care about wasting an expensive, exquisite wine he had kept and preserved for many years like it would be just cheap liquor from a nameless gas station. It seemed wrong. Terribly unprofessional. A personal alienation. And yet it was there. This subliminal anger inside him crouched like a gargoyle on the battlements of Notre Dame and ate at his guts, ate, *ate* and scratched his stomach walls. Rage. Disappointment. What he admitted nevertheless, was the undeniable cold that inherented the house since Will was gone. The emptiness. He had never noticed it that much, had even preferred to be alone in most nights. He had often been lonely in his life, this was no secret to him he'd lock away shamefully. But he had used methods and found ways to eradicate this state and banish it in an unimportant background by celebrating Dinner Parties, participating in various events to create a place in the higher class of society.

But this kind of loneliness that caught him off guard was different. It was so different that his own food was abhorrent to him and he actually wished to throw the emptied wine bottle against the nearest wall, wanted to watch with keen interest as the shards rotated on the smooth floor sparkling like unwrought diamonds in the electric glow of the ceiling lamp. But Hannibal did not let it come so far that this fantasy turned into a real act. Instead, he put the bottle back on the kitchen bar, cleaned the dishes and put both back to their original places in the higher cupboard. Then his feet led him rather unconsciously up to the first floor, directly guiding him to the bedroom. He did not really think about it, as he climbed the stairs, stopping at the slightly ajar door. He feared he could give himself no usable answer, and felt a secret ... fear about that.

As he stepped into the bedroom, the disorder could not surprise him there or further snub to some extent, he had finally been prepared mentally and visually for this. However, it did not prevent a quiet, cold stitch chasing his heart, when he saw Will's headlessly scattered clothes lying on the floor. Following a reflex, he knelt down and picked up a stone gray shirt that was close to him, wrinkled and crumpled like a used and dirty rag. It was one of those shirts Will always wore to sleep, along with the tight-fitting boxer shorts leaving no modest imagination about what his loins offered. Although Hannibal honestly rejoiced to make Will dress in finer wardrobe to embroider his skin with velvet and silk to the true extent of its stunning exterior, he had learned to appreciate this common clothing too somehow within the months they lived together. He appreciated it as the fact that Will was an incorrigible morning person and grumbled like a bear when he was awakened of Jack Crawford's calls in the early morning or that he sometimes hummed a song on the radio he actually his could not stand and did not seem to remember it when Hannibal asked him about this. It were these little things, keeping a harmless character of their everyday life Hannibal had get used to it and… had grown… fond of.

Hannibal made his way across the carpet, went to the bed and sat down on the mattress, shirt still clenched in his right fist. His mind restlessly plowed through the halls of the silent house, but his body felt heavy as lead, sunk in like a body under water coiled in chains, hidden in a

dark depth, which had not been discovered by researchers yet. He found no need to do anything else than to knead the fabric of the shirt between his thumb and index finger and breathe. Even that was difficult for him, as he remarked mildly surprised after some time.

The material was thin, soft and slightly raspy. It tickled on his fingertips. Snuggled into his touch as a dog would have done for his master. He thought of the times in which he had just pushed this substance up at night and explored the bare skin underneath without ever getting tired of it. As he had sipped on it with lips, hands and nose, looking as the pastel white moonlight spilled out over the dimly resting body of the profiler, portraying a pattern of polka dots and streaks. Moments, bathed in complete silence and the warmth of their two bodies. Their breath the only sound in light and darkness. Their touch regularly, sometimes quickly, sometimes feverishly, the desperate need of contact in every way possible. The memories of skin scraped longingly over skin, the helpless groans that sounded like music to his ears, framing the sluggish play of soft curls wet with sweat and spreadout on the pillow and Will's facial features derailed in lust and desire. A fleshen painting, burned in Hannibal's eyelids like a red-hot horseshoe into the groin of a cow every time he blinked and his surroundings disappeared from his sight. His fingers trembled ever so slightly as he lifted the shirt and pressed it in an almost desolute conduct against his nose. Eyes half closed, letting only two narrow, dark slits peeking out under the lashes, he sniffed, inhaled every breath of fleeting fragrance, he could find.

The bouquet of dried-sweat, lavender soap and salty sea wind, mixed with dead autumn leaves and delicate fragility captured his senses, took them, cast them as the Romans had occupied Troy with their wooden horse. He had a fine sense of smell and, as already mentioned, an even finer memory, which could memorize thousands, millions of perfume components and flavors effortlessly. He also wanted to impress Will's smell in his soul and bury it there like a corpse in moist soil. But he knew that even the strongest scent fled one day and would eventually run out, still not comparable to any perfume the world presented. Every other scent would just be a poor imitation, a tolerably lubricated plagiarism of the original. And he would never be able to replace neither Will's scent nor Will himself by all means, even if he might consider it later. It would be a farce, a community theater without rhyme or reason. Everyone was an individual. Will was unique. Will was special. Will was too precious to stay with another man than him. He would be wasted, at least Hannibal told this himself.

Who was capable to recognize the true value of this young man? Nobody. No one should remain there except him and no one would. He'd take care of that.
Short episodes of their dispute flashed in his mind and Hannibal did nothing else than to bury his nose even deeper into the shirt fabric. It was the only thing to stop his tears from falling that had gathered in his eyes, now freely running down his cheeks. He smelled the sweet salt in them, including the grief and the pain of his loss.

Perhaps the psychiatrist was clear that precise moment that he, Hannibal Lecter, had fallen victim to his own pitfall. In the hot-blooded desire to make Will Graham dependent on him in any relationship possible, he had completely overlooked or simply forgotten to realize that he himself was in danger to fall that much for the profiler. Cherishing him in a way that was near to the concept of worship, of adulation. This knowledge hurt, shook him, and he wondered silently how he had allowed himself to go that far. How could he have been so

careless in his control. How could he ... really and truly fall in love. And now? What was his price? A broken heart from which he had forgotten that it could still break. Ultimately he was only human and humans hated, humans loved and humans were wrong.

They wandered often and gladly mistaken.

He would have never imagined to lose him in such a banal way. Had never thought of losing him at all. He had felt so terribly safe, especially since the incident with Frederick Chilton when they had attended the opera. Wills words still echoed in his head, when he concentrated.

"I will not deceive you, you man-eating bastard - I want to spend my life with you, preferably in front and not on the dinner plate. Is this too much to ask for? "

And he had all the letters carved into the heart.

For it was **not** too much to ask. Basically it was what Hannibal secretly wished for all his life although he had always refused to slander his true nature and thus to give the dangers that went with it.
The small packet in his pocket knocked like an anvil against his thigh. A gift for Valentine's Day. He had wanted to give it Will during the dinner it wants, but so much time had not been granted to them. For Hannibal, it was the most horrible defeat he ever had to suffer. He could pursue Will, could find him and force him to go home with him but why? What was the point of chaining him day and night to the bed and keeping him quiet with drugs and soft spoken threats? Perhaps this method had been a promising option before, but was nothing against the prospect of a Will, who gave himself to him freely, who could be met with trust and loyalty. In addition, Hannibal had not the slightest idea where Will was at this hour. He had called his former home in Wolf tramp and one of the dogs had thrown the handset from the cradle and cheerfully barked into the mouthpiece. Even if Will had been there, he would have reported - after all, there were people like Jack Crawford, who claimed his services and those Will conceivable rarely escaped. Did he stay at Alana’s place? Or ... Frederick’s? Just thinking about how someone else took Will in his arms, touched him, caressed him, kissed him brought a hefty blow to Hannibal’s chest that enabled his breathing in a choppy, tormented rhythm for an indefinite period. Bile acid washed like poison on his tongue. Anger smoldering in his veins he clenched his hands into fists. He did not mind the fact that his fingernails were digging into the flesh of his palms and left reddish crescents.

He would not let this happen. He could not. Will had probably made his decision, but he had decided something too. He still had a few special words to say before their separation was officially handled. He would have the final sentence, some way or other. He would not give up so quickly and **not** without a fight. Not after he had invested such a considerable amount of time in the profiler. There would be a postlude.

He wanted to get up and pick up the phone (if Will was not with Alana, he could still be with Frederick or perhaps he had a vague idea where he might be at least) when suddenly the doorbell rang downstairs. The shock hit Hannibal’s muscles like a thunderbolt. He thought to feel his heart exposed for the duration blink of an eye, only to sense it hammering even harder against his shell of bones, flesh and skin, as it would want to jump in the air. *Did Will*

come back? Hannibal thought while already taking the first steps out of the bedroom and going into the hallway. Of course! Who else would knock on his door in the middle of the night!? … Well, Jack was a possibility too, but Hannibal ignored this exceptionally to increase his own hopes. And hope he did. If Will had really returned to him there was definitely hope. Moreover, it seemed only logical that Will rang the door instead of catching up as usual. In his headlong rage he had determinedly forget to take the house key with him, the one Hannibal had especially made for him. The psychiatrist licked about his lips in increasing nervousness as he descended the stairs.

But before he finally went to the lower floor, he stopped at a wall mirror and underwent a critical survey. His appearance was definitely leaving much to be desired, but he had neither the time nor the patience, to polish up his appearance. That's why he decided to he adjust his shirt collar, smooth the folds of his trousers and free his jacket from pesky dust. After he had tucked up his hair, he decided to face Will in this condition. It would be cool minded. Reserved, foresight and distance, at least at the beginning of their conversation. No windage offering any weakness. Will should not understand what turmoil he had kindled at the psychiatrist. He rehearsed to put a gentle smile on his face, teasing the corners of his mouth. Not too warm, but not too resistant either. He had to make Will suffer a little, so that a situation like this would not be repeated. The re-ringing at the door interrupted his thoughts. Slowly he took the last three steps, crossed his meeting room while the ringing changed to an impatient knocking against the bare wood. Although Hannibal would have found this behavior rude and annoying on other occasions, he laughed softly to himself now. Outside the door he stopped, held out his arm and covered the golden knob with one hand. He took another deep breath, steeling himself while the knocking continued simultaneously.

Then he straightened his shoulders and opened the door for his impatient profiler.

Hades and Persephone

Chapter Summary

Hannibal experiences a bad surprise. Will there be a reunion between Will and him? And which part has Beverly to play here? Find out!

Chapter Notes

WOW!

Really, I'm stunned. Thank you so much for the subscribes, bookmarks and kudos! I didn't think the story would gain that much attention but of course I'm happy and thankful and I hope you'll love this part as well ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The smile flowed down like honey from Hannibal's facial features, as he faced not Will, but the delicate, dripping wet figure of Beverly Katz eye to eye.

Her raven hair stuck to her flushed cheeks and her breathing was more hectic than usual. She kept her arms crossed over her chest to suppress an underlying tremor. The leather jacket, studded with bright yellow reflective stripes, wrapped around her body and the way she dangled her helmet casually in one of her hands indicated that she had taken the motorcycle for driving to Hannibal’s home. Although her appearance gave off cold, outwardly and inwardly, her eyes glowed like small brown lumps of fire while she pierced the psychiatrist with a practically withering glance. Hannibal frowned. She did not seem to be out of sorts with him and he didn’t know which faux pas had led her to this hostile attitude, nor did he care about it at that second.

Before he could greet politely and ask her what would lead her to his home at this ungodly hour, she began to brim over with words. And most of them were not chosen by selected kindness.

“Okay, I don’t know what happened between Will and you and I actually give a damn about this because this is your private life that shouldn’t concern me and I prefer it to stay this way.” she started without dot and comma, “but if a certain Will Graham is knocking on my door at eight clock in the evening,completely dissolved and asks me for the key to one of the boats that are stored on my family’s property for years, boats I once briefly mentioned during a conversation about two months ago, then this problem between Will seems to concern me definitely! “

She underlined the last words with a passionate sneezing and Hannibal blamed it on her unfailing presence of mind to ensure that she tilted her head to the side while doing it. That would have rounded out this cruel night. Nevertheless, she could have spit on him just as well at that moment, he felt miserable enough to let it truly happen.

“He told me he wanted to go fishing.” Now she sounded almost as angry as her enraged aura suggested. “Fishing at eleven clock at night in stormy weather, the most stupid idea I’ve ever heard! I tried to talk to him but he didn’t listen to me. He never listens to me when it has nothing to do with the investigation of a murders. He only repeatedly muttered a few sentence fragments, most of them including your name. And when I was on the verge to **not** give him the keys he looked at me and ... and ... fuck! ¨

The curse, studded with rich despair. told Hannibal more than a thousand words would have. Beverly had no need to be verbally abusive otherwise, did not correspond to their nature. The doubt itself, the loss of control and the gnawing on her lower lip seemed strange, underlined her excitement as a fresh curved calligraphy would have done on a blanked-out pencil line. But today everyone seemed to break a few rules of their own, including Hannibal himself and this was an extremely bad omen.
Usually he would have asked her to come in, have a hot drink and a seat by the fireplace as the rules of politeness told him. But the information of Will sailing alone on the sea during a storm, banished any principles and routines in the rearmost part of his brain that were deposited there in mental drawers with serial numbers and cordoned off as Fort Knox. His thoughts flashed to Will, as he headed for the deck of a fairly reliable fishing boat on the endless water level, saw the wind rushing through his dark curls, the salty sea spraying against his wet cheeks, the clapping surge of waves hitting along the bow as they would search for applause. He saw lightning jump over a soot black sky tent and cut through the rock gray cloud wall in bright, jagged lines.

He saw a wave of particular monstrosity, as it bared its foamy teeth forcing the boat to fluctuate with hungry force, then capsize it. He saw Will sink down in silk blue depths, arms and legs flailing wildly, anxious to get back to the surface, because the air bubbles went rarer and rarer in front of his mouth. He saw him fight and he saw him fear. Saw him cry under water. Then he saw him lose and he had to watch as the life of his wriggling limbs shook out until they floated limply in the liquid weightlessness. The lovely eyes wide until breathing stops, a brilliant expression of pure panic and resignation uniting in itself, the softly shimmering lips delicious parted and heather blue, the skin like polished bone in pastel pale wax. As if to confirm his own death scene deafening thunder roared across their heads and Beverly jerked abruptly. Maybe similar images also circulated in the nodes of her blank licked nerves. Maybe she just paid the price for her poor choice of clothing, Hannibal did not know and did not want to analyze it. The light in the hall said goodbye with a sizzling bang, then shadowy darkness wrapped both people in their icy mantle. The storm must have caught a power line. Hannibal's forehead had laid in careful folds.

“What is the boat’s name?” he asked quietly, although this question seemed very arbitrary, even ridiculously banal in this moment, and his heart pounded with a vehemence against his chest, the cardiologist would have had serious concerns about. Beverly acted irritated, but was quick to answer.

“Even though I highly doubt that you will find another boat out there, I gave him the keys to *Persephone*.” she said, snorted in uninhibited contempt. “My parents have developed a soft spot for Greek underworld myths. Horrible, this trash.” Hannibal raised a thin eyebrow. *Persephone*. He could almost taste the irony of that name in their present situation and disassemble on his tongue as one of his desserts, filled with bitter-sweet ingredients.

“Do you have a boat called *Hades*?“ He did not penetrate the question less easily from the lips as his first, still the words weighed heavier in his mouth, stood similiar to thorns in his teeth .

Beverly nodded and Hannibal had actually expected nothing else except this nod. While her hand was still holding the helmet, she fumbled in an inside jacket pocket with the other one, promoting a jangling bunch of keys , the narrow metal ring that hold them together already wearing the copper-toned traces of age.

“That's why I'm here for.” she said, held the keys in front of the psychiatrist’s nose and dropped it into his outstretched palm. “Sail after and find him before something ugly happens. The boats of the Katz family lie in the approximate middle of the harbor. I'm counting on you.”

Then she went without another word, backing out into the cold night. Taking the second step, she turned around one last time.

“He loves you.” she said, despite that Hannibal knew very well about this perfidious detail (at least he convinced himself to know and was less happy to be taught about it) and wasn’t surprised. Though he thought about the feeling that Moby Dick must had learned as Captain Ahab finally bored his harpoon into the soft flesh after a million of fruitless attempts and fed the ocean with oily blood, hit him like a dagger.
In addition, Beverly's voice served him more like an accusator than anything else.
“I have never seen him so confused... okay, completely thrown off track and no matter how much you messed things up ... or he, I don’t know... I guess he will forgive you if you take the first step to work it out. Just make sure that I’m not responsible for his sudden death, okay? Jack would tear off my head and I am very attached to this pretty face.”

Her damp hair painted a bow over her shoulder as she turned. Hannibal looked at her.

“Thank you, Beverly.” He was completely serious about his thanks. Her help had come unexpectedly, without being asked. Built up for the sole purpose of saving Will from himself or worse and to guard him. He appreciated this behaviour. If he should ever need to kill her, he would drape her body in an honorable, bloody work of art and not throw her away garbage, he did well enough otherwise.
However, Beverly just raised her hand in a farewell greeting.

“Thank me by catching your hothead again before something betides him.” she replied drily. He watched as the FBI agent swung herself on her motorcycle and let the vehicle howl like a wounded alpha wolf. Although time was short, he could not resist to watch as she rolled on

the road and hit the gas bluntly. She left a cloud of dust, which was, however, depressed shortly by the industrious raindrops. She turned to the left at the next intersection and merged with the shadows there.
Only then, Hannibal clutched the keys so tightly that the flesh of his hands adorned with bruises. He went to his car, started the machinery and put the car in gear. After all, there was a special stray he had to collect. And if Will had such great success with that so why should he be inferior to this?

The sea once asked one of his fish: "Why do you always stay with me and never leave me?"

The fish replied: "Because you are my life and I carry your love in my heart."

Hannibal was hardly surprised when this quote of Khalil et Khatib came to his mind, as he entered the harbor and stepped along the ridges,restlessly searching for a ship that bore the inscription Hades on its metal plate chest. The storm, however, had reached its brutal climax and sharp hissing gusts of wind cut into his skin and etched in his clothes. His vision was severely limited by the rainfall, but the highly distinguished shade rising a few meters away he recognized as row of houses. Some of them would accommodate restaurants and hotel rooms, others might have the abode of fishermen living here. He pulled his jacket tighter around his body that had become numb from the cold. The suit was hopelessly ruined. Hannibal didn't care. Maybe he would later find the time to get angry, but now it was more important to worry about something more worthy. It took ten minutes until he finally discovered the *Hades*. The boat rocked on one of the longer bridges, similar to a sleeping giant. They had been tied using an ankle-thick dew on a post. A small metal ramp led to the deck. *Hades* had a length of eight meters and seemed sturdily built, but it was still a mad endeavor to challenge the crashing waves in the middle of this storm. Hannibal sighed inwardly, perhaps hesitated two seconds before he took the first step on the ramp.

He was reluctant to risk his life in such a way, but to lose Will against a force of nature sickened him yet more. He hoped not to see the capsized ship's hold on the water, but he was also aware that hopes retained a deceptive component and certainly there was the possibility that Will had already perished in the floods. With these thoughts in tow Hannibal grabbed the railing and -

"Hannibal Lecter, are you nuts !? Come back down here right this instant, I dare you!"

Hannibal froze in mid-movement. He knew that voice well. Very well. Sometimes better than his own. It had become a confidant to him within months. He slowly turned around, eyes narrowed to slits being able to detect the voice's owner. Will stood somewhat apart from the Hades and looked at him with a frown and an expression of mixed horror and amazement. He had spanned a mint green umbrella over himself and was in dry condition. But the cloth around his legs were provided with soaking wet and darkly contrasting splashes, probably

from the puddles, in which he had stepped. He held down his head slightly askew, his arms crossed in a defensive posture. His skin seemed faint, but not alarming. He was alive. He was on solid ground. He was here. Hannibal would have lied by telling himself the sight hadn't taken a heavy load off his mind.

"Will." His throat suddenly felt like parchment. Rustling and scratchy. "I'm glad to see you. ".

"I'm not." Will replied insolently, but the horror remained in his eyes. And it did not disappear. "Especially not when you're just about to capture a foreign boat."

"Beverly has given me permission to do so."

"Why should she?"

"She was worried. She thought you were out there on the ocean."
Will snorted and shook his head, as he would want to get rid of an annoying fly.

"I was." he confessed," but when the first thunder rumbled above me I immediately returned to the harbor. The *Persephone* is two webs away from here." He tapped vigorously with his index finger against his temple. "I'm many things, but certainly not that dumb."
Hannibal saved a retort. Instead, he pulled sporadically on his collar, hopelessly moist and heavy between his fingers.

"How long have you been here?" he asked. He did not know what else to say.

Will wrinkled his nose as he thought.

"For quite an hour I guess." he meant then, lower lip stucking out a bit, giving him a childish touch as Hannibal thought. "I took a walk. To, you know ... arrange my thoughts and such."

"Yes." Hannibal didn't need to add anything to that. "I did the same."

He climbed down the ramp again, remained on the dew's verge. The rain ran in spindly twines out of his hair, sparkled like crystal beads before it fell to the ground and burst open like a color bomb. Will looked at him for a while, wrapped himself in silence. The anger that had taken possession of his nature only a few hours before had subsided to a mild throbbing aura, no comparison to its previous state. And in the depths of his eyes was something that Hannibal recognized as a spark of remorse. It was stale and insignificant and puny, but it existed. Finally, Will dropped his shoulders and let out a deep sigh. Holding up the umbrella like a national flag he walked over to Hannibal. He turned it a little while he approached the psychiatrist, so a radio play of water danced around his figure.
Hannibal did not move from the spot, interested in what the profiler was doing. As they both stood almost chest to chest, Will paused and raised the umbrella silenty above their heads, to protect them both from the rain. It was such a simple, naive need for caring that it forced Hannibal to a ghostly smile.

He already opened his lips, transformativing the word Why, but Will was faster.

“Don’t kid yourself, you look like a drowned rat and I have a soft spot for animals, that's all. I can’t look at you without doing anything but I’m still mad at you.” he muttered to justify his action and stared pointedly to the side, avoiding eye contact at all costs.

He wanted to be angry again, wanted to evoke the old rage as a flute player made his cobra dance, felt the fruitless effort literally tingling in the air. The psychiatrist, however, was not impressed. He reached out a hand and let it rest at Wills cheek, turned his face slowly, but firmly in his direction, so that their eyes met inevitably. The skin he touched was wet and clammy and cold as porcelain sculptures of angels monitored against a weathered grave stone. The white half-moons of his eyes were paved with coral-red veins, including dark circles under the lids. His lips had turned into the color of lime and paled rose quartz. Hannibal would have been too happy to kiss awake these lips and given them their healthy, dark tint back, but he restrained himself, fearing it would put off Will even more in his current state. Until now, the atmosphere between them seemed to be stable, but he did not want to take risks. Not again. He had learned his lesson.

“You’re beautiful.” he said softly instead.

His thumb stroked immensely tender over the soft skin, felt cautiously the invisible veil of dried tears and the embedded body heat. He met no resistance. Will looked at him, his view now shaped with morbid amusement.

“I'm not beautiful. I’m a wrack.” he said in reply. It sounded tired, exhausted. Hannibal smiled slightly. He had a lump in his throat.

“It doesn’t matter. You’re always beautiful. Even when you cry.” he replied, went lower and finally touched Will's mouth, gently drawing its perfectly curved line. “I thought I might never see you again. According to that I would take the whole night to look at you without getting tired of it. Not that I would ever be....” A drop of liquid shredded on his hand, wetted it with moisture. It was no rain. The rain was cold. But the drop was warm.

Suddenly it was to Hannibal as if the time had stopped between them. Only the drop, the drop moved, ran down his wrist, pulled under his shirt sleeve, damping the silk fabric.
He heard the umbrella fall to the ground with a quiet clack as it would happen from far away. Every sound, even the crackling of the descending rain seemed wrapped in cotton wool, his vision blurred and somehow sharpened at the same time. Grotesque. Wills lips quivered in time with his heartbeat. Not strong, but steadily. Hypnotized him. Corrupted him. Betrayed him. Made him forget all prudence.
Hannibal saw the blow coming before it reached him, but he did not avoid it.

Then. A fist in his face. A hit that shoved his head aside. The hot pressure flared in his throbbing cheek swelling similar to a bud in bloom, the clumsy, anesthetized numbness that spread around the left side of his skull. The pain was secondary, bearable. He knew it from previous encounters. He tasted bloody copper in his mouth but even that did not bring him out of the rest. He inspected Will’s face, fascinated by the agony and disgust reflected therein.

He saw hatred in that face, hatred and such a desire that also bordered on hatred, but it was something entirely else. Hannibal had only the duration of a breath to fall in love with this expression, wishing to capture it here and now with charcoal pencils on a clean sheet of paper to preserve every detail of the gruesome perfection.

After the third breath Will was in his arms, trembling like a leaf while tears welled in silent streams over his face. He made no sound as he buried his nose and mouth in Hannibal's neck to hide his shame and his sorrow the world was looking for. His fingers stabbed like kitchen knives in the shoulder blades of the psychiatrist and he enjoyed them, threw his arms around the profiler's body in an almost rehearsed gesture and pressed it to his own, bathed in animalistic greed and all too human, ugly relief while his left cheek glowed like magma and choppy, stifled sobs of the younger man breathed in his ears and he compared it to a symphony, an opera of pain and bliss specially composed for him. No matter what facade or barrier Will had shielded himself, it had collapsed and he clung so desperately to his psychiatrist as it would determine his life and who knows, maybe it did.
Without the umbrella the sky poured water over their heads again, but no one of them cared. Even if, they would not have drown in the rain, but more likely into each other and perhaps that would have been an almost peaceful death in this moment. A death that would have prevailed justice on both sides of the court.

"Why didn't you come back home?" Hannibal whispered to him, put his lips to the wet curls and smelled the remained sea wind in them, tasted salt and oil. Will made a noise that could have been a weak burst of laughter, but also just as simple groan. Eitherway it didn't sound too happy.

"I thought there would be no home I could return to anymore." he muttered dully. His voice sounded broken. Hannibal felt as an arrow would have drilled into his groin, but he did not show it.

" **I am** your home, William." he said imploringly. "I'd never exclude you." And that was a truth he would have loved to tattoo into the profiler's bones, so that he never forgot it. Will took a rattling breath. Whether unconsciously or not, he leaned even closer to Hannibal.

"I left you, remember?" he whined.

Hannibal remembered.

"You didn't leave me." he simply said, thinking of the scattered clothes in their bedroom, the smell of sweat, hard soap, sea, autumn leaves and fragility. He inhaled deeply and although the metallic scent of rain almost covered everything, Hannibal could smell this odor on Will, fresh and lively, fleshy and blood-filled. Heavenly Hell. He found that smell in his hair, on his temple, on his neck. All over his body . At least he knew by now that he had developed an irresistible addiction for this man and if he was honest, then this knowledge should have scared him enough to raise his own judgment to question. Almost. Weaknesses were dangerous. Needles could and would tear long healed wounds. He would cross a line and have to pay his fee for it. Softly he let his half-open mouth wander over the sensitive spot under Will's jaw, where the pulse chased very quickly and pressed his lips to it, tasting pure life. He felt Will shiver under the touch and hoped he felt the smile that shone in his skin.

“I could not breathe.” he heard Will say. "When I ran out of the house I almost choked because I didn’t get any air. It - it was as if my lungs would lock in protest.” he swallowed hard, gasping for oxygen as this feeling of suffocation did not belong to the past, but to the present. “What have you done to me?”

“I could ask you the same.” Hannibal replied and he pressed the younger one so close to him, as he wanted to incorporate him. He honored the moment with silent words. “We should discuss this in a drier place. We're going home now.”

He broke the hug and took Will's hand like a child’s, being afraid he would run away from him again and get lost in the local supermarket. Will let it happen, but stopped after few yards abruptly.

"Wait." he said softly. They stopped. Hannibal peered suspiciously over his shoulder. His thumb pad stroked warningly over Will's hand. "Yes?" he asked, but it sounded out of tune. “Maybe we should go to one of these houses over there. Beverly's parents have two of them rented throughout the year and I’ve got the keys. We should wait until the weather has calmed down.” He leaned forward, touched Hannibal's shoulder. “Then we’ll go home, okay? It’s no use if we have a car accident.” He lowered his voice to several octaves, so that his next words formed barely a whisper. “We should rather... warm up.”

Hannibal studied Will’s glance. He found a transient glow at the mention of the last word that could mean anything. But he already had an idea. And let his barriers sink down a bit for a moment. Again he thougt of the weight in his pants pocket,noticeable by its clumsy severity and it reminded him of the occasion he actually had wanted to devote before their confrontation messed up everything. A warm tone appeared in the maroon iris.

“Agreed.”

Chapter End Notes

Kudos will give Will warm kisses and more tight hugs from Hannibal and comments will give you the last chapter sooner than I might want to post it... it's ready already hehe ;3

Greets,
heartofsnow

A Question and no Answer

Chapter Summary

Hannibal and Will have to talk. While this, Hannibal remembers how he confessed his feelings for Will for the first time months ago.

Chapter Notes

Wow... wow, People, I'm so happy. Thank you all SO MUCH for the kudos, the comments, the subscribes, simply everything, I'm so grateful <3

Hope you'll like the Grande Finale as well!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They chose the smaller of the two houses to escape the raging aftermath of the storm.

The wind snapped his disappointed dirge as they stepped through the door and Hannibal closed behind them, while Will shook himself like a dog that had been forced into a bubble bath. Raindrops hung like a network of diamond plates in his softly curled, damp hair. Hannibal thought about how often he had tried to smooth these curls with a comb, but each time he had failed again. Will's beings had, in fact, a recalcitrant component and nothing could have expressed this better than his own, borken brown hair. Somehow Hannibal liked this detail, calmed him almost. At the same time it made him think about the dangers that included Will or were dedicated to Will himself. The unruly were harder to control and conduct on the chosen route. The unruly reserved the right to act as incorrigible maverick and to thwart plans by a crime of passion.
What was unruly, could decide to run away. Leave him, as Will had tried to leave him tonight. There was a risk that Hannibal had not included and no matter how angry he was about his own faux pas, thanks to the profiler the shock of finding him and the relief of finding him *alive* still rattled in his bones like his skeleton was made of ice cubes. He was not used to lose something he intended to call his own. He was not accustomed to look at Will at this moment and imagine him as a disobedient pet that had broken loose with no brand and collar or leash and piled out of the garden, but he did. Of course, Will was a man, he had a mature functioning mind and knew the difference... but somehow this fact made Hannibal merely angrier, because it suggested ability *to know better*. If a dog or cat ran away from home, it was rarely questioned. It was assumed as the fact that the sky is blue and grass was green and rain was wet.
But if a person like Will voluntarily left his house with the intention to never come back, then it felt like a serious, hateful betrayal. He couldn't cope with betrayal that easily.

Et tu, Brute?

Hannibal swallowed down a bitter smile. Even his inner voice sounded mocking.

He saw how Will took off his jacket and hung it casually over a chair. The gray flannel shirt he wore was as soaked as Hannibal felt. The water dipped the bright, silvery fabric in a darker shade and Hannibal could not help to particularly focus his gaze on Will's chest, how he groaned softly as he crossed his arms behind his head and stretched. He saw his semi erect nipples protruding, probably provoked by the gentle friction of the material and the cool scratchy irritation. Unconsciously, Hannibal licked his lips. Recalcitrance could have its own appeal. It was like fire. Stretching out his arm and the flames would bite his fingers. On the other hand, they gave a pleasant hear as long as you kept a safe distance…
However, Hannibal had never seen a use for a clear definition of their relationship and therefore his barriers wound down in many areas of his personality, similar to the windshield of a car, opened to be kissed by a fresh breeze on forehead, lips and eyelids.Will had always infested simple curiosity in him, inextricably entangled with the question of how he would react when he told him about his *true identity*. Of course, the revelation that he was a cannibalistic gourmet plus the Chesapeake Ripper had prevailed the entire process. As it might be expected,Will had not necessarily responded positively to this revelation.

Secretly, Hannibal was still strictly convinced that his exhilarating wine stock had postulated the role of unsung heroes that night.

He had never thought of Will as an excessive drinker, but then, on that fateful evening months ago, the profiler had carried glass for glass into his throat as he would rush water into a bottomless canyon. At least it spared him the intravenous drug the psychiatrist had wanted to use for keeping him quiet. With that, a halfway civilized conversation was possible even though Will was very very drunk. Finally, Will had fallen asleep on the couch and Hannibal had taken off his jacket and draped over his shoulders as a temporary blanket and silently placed himself in the opposite chair. He had not slept a single second that night, he knew it as if it had been yesterday. Will had seen him without his mask and he had wondered what words now would be sent to him as soon as this man would blink apathetically and stare at him with these gorgeous bright eyes, still hanging in the feverish luster of sleep. Eyes that held more of a divine than human existence.

But had God not created the man in his own image? And hadn’t Will just become his work like Adam had when God created him from clay and blew the breath of life breath blew in his nose? He had accepted the psyche and the problems of the profiler with professional, personal zeal, had listened to his visions and witnessed the slow, incomplete decay of his mental health, legs crossed meticulously, hands folding blameless in his lap. He had tied him to hidden threads and then drove him away to figure out the other direction. Until he had eventually led him to the brink of a precipice. Only after Will had appeared with Abel Gideon at the front door, he had to understand that a further step forward would crush this delicate nervous system to its foundations and then Will would be no more than one of his normal, soulless, interchangeable dolls. A puppet whose strings had been cut with a sharp razor blade. And to Hannibal's own amazement this thought, *this end* had borne a terrible aversion and a coppery aftertaste in his mouth, and neither of these features could be easily shaken off or

rinse. He analyzed himself and soon realized that Will Graham was more than just a pawn on his game board. The time with him had left their traces and they were so strong that Hannibal could not tell if it horrified or fascinated him anymore. Probably both, and maybe he could live with it.

He started up in alarm, as a low moan washed over Will's gently parted lips and he tilted his head slightly to one side, completely caught up in his unconscious dreams. The movement exposed a narrow strip of pale throat. Hannibal could see veins throbbing under his skin and he bit so firmly on his lower lip at this sight that he tasted blood. The profiler was there. Open, unprotected, delivered. It bordered on mockery that he pressed Hannibal's jacket against his chest like a plushie and took deep, rhythmically calm breaths. Apparently the smell of the psychiatrist pursued him even in dreams and he seemed to sink into a grotesque, scandalous peace through it. A gently undulating strand of hair had crept into his milk-colored forehead, destroyed the perfection of the image. Hannibal leaned forward slowly and tugged it away, ordered the mop that didn't want to be ordered, resisting for it was his nature, like Will was a freak of nature as well.

A questionably beautiful freak. A unique individual, a pearl in the ash. A precious diamond in the rough.

For a ridiculous second Hannibal felt hot and cold, as his fingers glided over Will's warm scalp and he instinctively jerked forward, while the psychiatrist tried to solve the contact. It was a downright unremarkable reaction, a foreboding twitching only, hardly worth to mention. Hannibal felt a stitch, agonizing as dowel impaling the undead heart of a vampire. What followed this stitch, was an unknown pain. What followed after the pain was understanding and displacement casting doubt on his own jugdement. What followed after understanding and displacement was ... a very tender, fragile feeling. A vulnerable feeling. The desire to protect bundled with the desire to catch, to collect revenue. They flooded his blood like battery acid, torpedoed and massacred his thoughts like a ravenous pack of termites.
He had felt such a feeling several decades before for once. This feeling had affected Misha. Misha, his beloved little sister, his former star in the darkness of this world ... he had been so young. Oh, and how horrible she had to pay for this young life. He could not help her, was unable to alleviate her suffering or to shoulder her burden. He had failed, had been weak. But now, now he was older and the years had taught him wisdom and experience and above all bone biting coldness. He had thought to never to feel this feeling again, had been convinced to develope no basically sweet feeling for another person other than his own reflection but he did. Surely the devil crossed his claws her, rolling with loaded dice under the game table, but he couldn't care less. Will was not like Misha, he was aware of that immediately. Mischa had been his sister and a part of her would accompany him to his grave, but Will ...

Will wasnotMischa.

Will would never be Misha. Will was not a replacement that should fill the role of a little brother or sister. Will was like him. Sometimes Will was Hannibal. And sometimes Will was just Will. Sometimes he was a monster, sometimes he was an angel with scarred wings and Hannibal knew he would rather cut off his wings than let him fly away. Will's eyeballs jerked restlessly back and forth behind his closed eyelids, dreamed, failed, fantasized, feared.

Hannibal smiled shallow. Almost human warmth lined up in his dark irises.

No, even God could have him. Not he, and none other. Not in this life and if it was enough, not even in the afterlife. This man belonged to him and him alone. Since the beginning of their acquaintance he had yearned to become his own creation. He would be a better God for him as the one to whom they worshiped in their sacred Bible and their occasionally collapsing churches. Perhaps Will Graham's further life would entail an asymmetrical balance of joy, sorrow and blood, but Hannibal hesitated rarely, if it was his property. He would not take his freedom. Not entirely, at least. A bite from the tree of knowledge had caused the God of the Christians and Jews to punish Adam and Eve and banish them from Eden. Hannibal would not do that. He would pluck the fruit from the branches, crush it in his hand and sprinkle Will’s lips with its honeyed juice, nourishing him with knowledge and sin over and over again, when the tree gave fresh buds.

He would treat his life like a porcelain vessel in cotton wool, only chains, visible chains of iron and metal he would not create. He loved him too much and he did not want to risk destroying the last sparkle of his unruly mind. These were edifying thoughts, heretical, certainly immoral, but they took almost healing in order to be confused thoughts construct and helped him to concentrate. To orient. Until the night vanished and golden dawn shone in his room. But when Will finally squinted his eyelids, then blinked, then yawned, opened his eyes wide and the bordeaux red morning light drowned in his mortal lakes, Hannibal forgot every sentence he had settled for this special moment. Words were out of place here. Words were too crude to express, too superficial for his intentions. ***Words were not enough.*** Instead, he leaned forward, inhaled Will’s low rising aftershave and united their lips in a silent, infernal burning kiss.

The mouth of the profiler was as soft as he had looked in the glow of yesterday's overhead lighting, if not even softer. Hannibal tasted the strong abstinence of toothpaste, the lost bouqet of various wine bottles out of his pantry and something forbiddenly delicious he could not name, although he kept stored all spice associations in his memory palace. He called this wonderful, musky flavor simply Will then (and he would want to wear this taste on his tongue until he died). Somehow this certainty germinated like warm dough in his chest. He was not afraid. On the contrary, he found that sudden tightness in his heart quite charming.

But not nearly as charming as the inertial pressure with Will kissed him back. Groping, unsure, probably still walking in an intermediate dimension of sleeping and waking. Hannibal did not mind. The blood coursed through his veins as he deepened their contact, slipping his tongue into the oral cavity of the younger manpushed in after intake of other oral cavity surpessing a thin smile. The defense was weak and uncoordinated. When Hannibal perceived a strange hand entangling its fingers in his hair, he spread out his arms, leaning with one knee onto the couch and hugged Will’s upper body with a firm grip, pressed him to himself. He felt the pulse and the heat of his counterpart, smelled the pungent aftershave with a ship on the bottle and coined it to each disc, everything he felt and perceived. With a smuggish satisfaction he noticed that Will flinched neither before him, nor sought to avoid his touches (what would have been difficult in his position anyway). Hannibal knew that the profiler would have hated any kind of physical contact otherwise. He took it as an earned privilege that Will almost desperately clung to him.
The pulling on his hair increased minimally, was replaced shortly thereafter by an arm around

his neck, directing him closer. The profiler seemed to be starved for physical warmth and closeness. Just another aspect defusing their situation and maneuvering Hannibal's fate on a happy train.

'I could take him, here and now' it shot through his head and the images that formed in his dark fantasy awoke a rare lust. *'He belongs to me since we met in Jack's office. So why wait any longer? Wait until it's too late? '*. He admitted that these were selfish thoughts, ambitions of pure, unadulterated selfishness. Will stood in conflict with him and with himself. His judgment remained in limbo but what if it did not turn out in his favor? What if Will called him a monster and made it his personal mission to bring him down? Hannibal knew that he had to kill him then and this was very bitter scenario to chew. He ended the kiss, still gently sipped Will's lower lip just to release it abruptly.

They looked at each other. Silence fanned like a holey bridal veil across their heads. The red of the sun parodied an orange-yellow collar on the polished wooden floor.

"You could always wake up like this." whispered Hannibal, no signs of breathlessness, while Will violently gasped for oxygen in return. His lips were slightly swollen and shone in a provocative red. The psychiatrist was enthroned on him and so close, so close that he could hear his heart beating.

"I don't think this type of alarm would encourage me to get out of bed." he muttered, lowered his eyes and stared on his feet and the carpet between. Hannibal realized that the profiler was ashamed and he wanted to expel him this idea very quickly. His thumb pad stroked Will's cheek.

"Sometimes ... we don't have to." he replied thoughtfully. "Sometimes we can spend all day in bed and ponder the company of each other. We could share a blanket, a home, a life. You only need to allow it."

The Profiler snuggled up in Hannibal's hand without taking his cobalt eyes off of him.

"Why would you want me by your side?" He sounded doubtful. Lurking. As he was taken to the point of a joke that never came. Hannibal smiled thinly.

"I think you underestimate yourself too much, my dear." he said.

"I think you're a murderer, Doctor Lecter." Will said without blinking. Hannibal leaned forward a little, so that their hips collided and the profiler sucked in a trembling breath.

"I think we are, however, so familiar with each other that we can leave formalities out. No *Doctor* anymore." the elder man said and parked his lips on Will's temple. "I may to be a murderer, Will, but I have retained my dignity." he whispered. "I don't kill randomly."

"Why didn't you kill *me*?" Will bowed his head slightly to one side, so that Hannibal's lips missed his temple. Hannibal buried his nose at Will's delicate throat instead. It made the other body shiver beneath him. "I mean, I was hot on your trail, right?" Will sputtered. Hannibal smiled into his skin.

“I will do you no harm, Will. I only want what's best for you.”

“That would be?“ Will did not sound convinced. The psychiatrist licked languidly over his carotid artery, before he continued with his speech. The taste of meat, salt and life kissed his tongue. Vulnerability. He was getting hard and smelled that Will’s arousal grew, too. They resembled fuses, clinging to each other and mutually sat down in fire and Hannibal liked the interaction of this metaphor very well.

“You’re unique.” he purred and cupped Will’s growing erection through his trousers. He wanted to hear him gasp. And he did. “Giving yourself to another man than me would be a shameful waste of your glory.”

“Waste? Glory?” Will laughed, but his eyes were not laughing with him. They were bathed in pulsating pleasure. “Am I a man or a perishable commodity now?”

“Both.” Hannibal said. He drank Will’s moans in like a fine wine as he rubbed his thumb over the hidden flesh, feeling it harden and soaking the fabric. “One should never mate the extraordinary with the common. Spoils the breed.”

“Ah, “ Will took one hand from Hannibal's neck and tugged blindly at his collar, brought it into disorder. It was not the only thing he had brought in disarray and it would certainly not be the last. His voice sounded heavy. “Are we already talking about children, Doctor Lecter? A family? My dogs could camp in your – *ah* – garden.”

Hannibal was at this moment strangely glad that he could hide his face in Will’s skin, because he would not have expressed any encouragement while hearing these words. He estimated Will’s peculiar connection to his dogs and the fidelity, they brought him for it, but dogs were dogs and dogs brought also dirt into the house. Hannibal had never been particularly good to take chaos in his home and he already knew now that it would cost him much to actually welcome these new roommates with four legs and tail.
But he also knew that one had to make sacrifices in order to achieve objectives. Sometimes even a sacrifice with paws. ... or a drinking bottle? He had never thought seriously about bringing up children. Not since Misha. But the idea of a child that had Will’s eyes and his tangled hair, fascinated him. Only if this stimulus would be enough to revert to the reality, was not clear.

“Maybe later.” the psychiatrist said therefore. “After all, we already have the responsibility for Abigail, don’t we?” His mouth parted, offered two rows of sharp teeth he delicately lowered into the quivering flesh beneath him. “But right now I’m not interested in sharing you with *anyone*. Do you understand that?”

“I understand.” Will attempted to sit up a little. Hannibal let him. “But I don’t think you ever want to share me. Neither in the present nor in the future. This is the drawback of a hunter like you.” He raised an eyebrow, as if he could not believe the words escaped him so fluently. How coldly he brought them over his lips. “Hobbs honored his girls by using or eating them. You are not honoring your prey, you consume it before the meat rots. You're a butcher with a fine palate. What doesn’t end up on your plate, is either distasteful, necessary or sacred.” He

snorted. A soulless smile spread around his mouth. “I probably belong to the third section, eh?” It was a rhetorical question. But it was decisive.

Hannibal looked at him. His gaze was unfathomable.

“Maybe.” he said softly then. “Would you mind?” He chose his words carefully, as he always did. Wanting to eradicate the last vestiges of uncertainty of their relationship in all finality. This was the moment when Will had to make his choice and either wove their destiny in one or gave birth to its downfall. At least the psychiatrist allowed him to believe *that he had a choice.*

He watched as Will took his broad hand of the now emaciated collar, pulled on his nimble fingers and led them to his lips in an unusually flirtatious gesture. His breath burned like fire on his skin.

“Kiss me again, and I may have an answer.” he said.

It was a nefarious invitation and the psychiatrist did not hesitate to act. He kissed him. Kissed him many times that morning and the morning after. And the morning after. And the morning after.
But he never got this answer, and sometimes at night when he lay awake and looked at his sleeping Will, all the worry, the pain and disorientation flushed out of his gorgeous face, he was sure as hell itself, he would never want to hear it.

He was too afraid of a negative response.

“What's this? Your fishing?”

With mild curiosity, Hannibal stared at the open freezer located in a back corner of the living room. Gradually, his thoughts crept back into the present reality and he felt the clammy cold in his sodden clothes and heard the drumming of raindrops on the roof shingles again.

“Yes.” Will put the umbrella in a dedicated stand near the door. His body trembled incessantly, but this time not because of the emotional impact that had just befallen him in the rain, but due to the temperature-induced freezing. “I fished in the traditional way.”

Hannibal nodded absently. He knew what Will meant with *traditional*. Will had told him once. It was said that one should name a bait after a person he or she loved. Did one caught a fish then, this was the confirmation that the person reciprocated that love. It interested him if ...

“After whom you named your bait?” Will hesitated with his reply for a few minutes by looking out of the window that was adorned all over with long strands of water. His hands rested in the pockets of his jeans.

He clucked his tongue.
Then, finally.

“After **you**.” he said. He tried to keep it monotone, but he failed miserably. Hannibal turned his gaze for a single second away from him, watching every movement, every breath, every movement in this face that was ensnared in the light of flashes and flickering shadows and united the melodrama of an entire opera in a single twitch of the right eyebrow.

“And how many fish did you catch?” he asked quietly.

Will said nothing. He raised both of his hands mutely in the air. Two fingers of the right hand were bent. Hannibal nodded. Eight fish.

“Impressive.” he praised. Will shrugged.

“I wanted a maximum of two.” he said. “But it worked over and over again and ... I could not believe it, normally I don’t have such luck. So I cast the fishing rod again.” He threw his hands in the air. An seemingly helpless added gesture. “Until it was too stupid. And the weather changed.” he added. Then he stopped rigorously, turned and threw Hannibal a sharp look. “Don’t tell me you'd really have sailed into this in storm to look out for me! The boat could have capsized! You could have been KILLED out there for fuck’s sake!” Fresh fear and bitterness were shown on his flushed face and Hannibal realized that Will probably saw horror scenarios in his mind's eye similar to the ones he himself had thought of. Yet he did nothing to appease him. To know the pain did not mean he wanted to tame it. Not now. Not even if this pain emanated from the thoughts of his chosen partner. Hannibal took deliberately time with his answer, wandered aimlessly with his gaze around the room and speculated about whether Beverly's parents had spent their last weeks of summer here. The well-kept condition of the house suggested that it was used more often.

“You said you wanted to leave me.” he stated drily. “I couldn’t accept this, so my drowning would have meant just another punishment.” He sounded calmer than he felt. “You know death never frightened me.” The word death broke like a boulder from his lips, popped it in between the sonorous silence. The thunder parried it with a hoarse crescendo, leaving the walls tremble and the stairs grind. Will’s mouth detracted, landed on a glowing white line.

“But you fear mine.” he said. “A death that isn’t caused by your own hand.”

Hannibal went along the table that ruled the center of the room. His fingertips slid ghostlike over the polished ash. His gaze was directed at his reflection on the surface. From this angle his body seemed thrown in wax, the face of spongy contenance, his exorbitant fine wardrobe a dull garb of mud, rain and smoke. He found himself, not to say ugly, but was also mesmerized by his own ugliness and believed finally to understand what grief had plagued the Beast, as the Beauty held up a mirror for him. He remembered how the Beauty of this old

French fairy tale had yet found a way to look behind the disgusting mask and was inflamed with love for the dreaded, raw monster. Hannibal was not raw. In fact he was a very appetizing monster, but that did not change the fact that he was considered to be a monster when his shell was removed and and the watery core of his being opened, visible to the gaping and clamoring quantities .They would burst out into roar, they would love to see him hanging on the cross, nailed, desecrated, broken. And he would still have been an attractive corpse after all.

“Yes.” he said, and his voice was a growth of canopy and blood moss.

His answer was as insightful as honest. Without frills and without art. With Will he needed no manners. With Will he needed no polite restraint and no cute knitted lie. Will could read in him like a book and he read Will like a painting that was amazing and vulnerable in its unfinished version.

The profiler knocked with one of his pearly white knuckles against the window glass, as if to challenge the raging storm raging outside.

“Why does it always rain when we fight?” he muttered and the surly tone drew a smile from Hannibal.

“I don’t know.” he replied, his skin a bright column in the spotlight of thunder. “Maybe God is sorry for us.”

“Then why does he let us fight at all?” Will asked. Hannibal smile ran out harder.

“God hasn’t begun this dispute but you, Will.” Will snorted. A harsh chuckle escaped his lungs.

“Ah, of course you would see it this way.” he replied, peeking over to Hannibal. The 'attack' on the web seemed over, and he was fairly caught. “You'll never apologize for it, right?”

Hannibal stopped behind a chair and held the backrest thoughtfully.

“I would only slander myself. I can not change who I am, Will. And I won’t. I can’t, not even for you, mano mėgstamas.”

“I know.” Will sighed. It contained a cracked sound. “Then I’ll have to live with it. Finally.”

Hannibal’s fingers dug deeper into the back’s chair and it was clear that he would leave ruts in the furniture but in this moment he forgot his good manners entirely.

“I'm sorry you see it this way.” he said, still quiet, with a vague undertone of nothing.

Will also headed for the table until they were facing each other and not more than two meters of polished wood separated them. Simultaneously the profiler stretched out a hand and grabbed the back of a chair placed in front of him in an almost graceful arc. He did this frequently when Hannibal and he had a conversation that he found serious but dangerous too.

Copying his behavior. Hannibal took it as dubious parody of the Copy Cat Killer he had mimed for a memorable small period of time to lead the FBI astray and to keep Jack busy. But he had to admit he was impressed when Will instructed an imitation of his conduct. It was a strangely submissive and yet brazen form of homage. Will's eyes found his**.**

“How do I see it?” he asked. His gaze was lurking, his body tense. Secretly Hannibal enjoyed those situations where they acting like predators stalking each other, ensnared themselves. He loved the innocent, vulnerable side of Will's character with unquestionable fervor, he truly did, but it also the smoldering dark, demonic charm of the profiler held a lure that begged for deeper exploration.

“As a burden. A curse. Choose what is more suitable to you.” He did not sound bitter. As if a dog that wanted to bite, when one stepped on his tail. But he didn’t. And that made Will’s threatening attitude fall apart like a house of cards. The light returned to his eyes and the angel of his aura embraced him with glowing hot wings.

“Loving you, despite knowing better, despite of your cannibalism and despite all the things you’re capable of is the only curse I’ll ever permit myself.” he said, touched his forehead, as he was suffering from migraines (what probably was the case). “I’m often so incurably mad at you, I could kill you with my bare hands, but I can’t. Not because I'm not capable ... but killing you would kill me. A fraction of me. It’s ... difficult.”

Hannibal was not interested in any explanation. He already knew. Or believed to know, but that did not matter.

“I complete you.”

“You *devour* me.” Will corrected him harshly, perhaps more harsh than intended. He rubbed his left temple in small circles. “My thinking, my actions, my existence. In the one as in the other way. And at some point, nothing will be left of me you can refresh yourself on.”

Hannibal's mouth sagged south.

“You’re describing a very bleak future, Will.” His tone was noncholant and peppered with a clear indictment. He squirmed around the table, but at the same time Will went in the opposite direction. They were like the two figures on a point-symmetrical scheme and they chased each other like animals in a circle.

“It is the only future I find realistic.” the profiler replied. He tugged at his shirt, buttoned it up to expose his bare, pale chest. He seemed to get no more air. A circumstance that put Hannibal instinctively on alert.

“I've got you stuck in no cage, Will.” he explained as gently as he could. “You still have a choice.”

“Oh, have I?” Will lifted his chin and looked at him briskly. “I left. You followed. You'll also follow me next time.”

Hannibal said nothing - what was closest to a confession. Silence imprisoned their tongues, but not their legs, while they expired a single, full circle in slow motion. The psychiatrist played to fit the movements of the younger ones like that he had done with him earlier. Shortly thereafter, as Will focused his concentration rather on his migraine than on his counterpart for a moment, Hannibal managed to steer the pattern into the other direction and thus to bridge their distance in no time until he could stretch out his arm to grab the profiler's wrist. Will opened his mouth to scream, but it gurgled unheard in his throat. Then he began to squirm, tried to shake the psychatrist's hand off. Hannibal overcame this without particular difficulties. He was used to catch his victims as one caught floundering fish, why should it be any different with Will now? Nevertheless, he felt a soft lump in his throat, recording Will's reaction. It made him feel unwanted. Undesirable and hated, and he could not bear this. Not when it came to Will Graham.

"Will there be a next time?" he asked, his voice as sharp as a young forged Katana. "Will, will there be a next time!?"

He had to know. Needed to know if Will would betray him again this way. He believed he would have to actually lock him up then, for nothing else guaranteed him they would wake up in in the same bed next morning. It would be sad but necessary. He'd never let Will go.

Will cursed.

"Leave me alone -!" he cried, and his free hand clenched into a fist. This time Hannibal grabbed it in time and held both hands in an iron grip. With a jerk he pulled the profiler so close to him that the tips of their noses almost brushed making every kind of flight unrealistic. At that moment he was the fisherman and Will was the fish. He rolled the cord and pulled the younger one in though he struggled and spat and trembled with rage and fear. Hannibal did not want to hurt him, as long as it could be avoided. But one must not forget that Will had hurt him that day too, as he shout that *he could no longer bear this* and had clackedthedoorsoviolentlyinto its lockthatthe hingesalmostjumpedapart. Hannibalcould not forgetthat, andnor could heforgiveit. Notat leastuntilthe profilerhad receiveda punishmentexpiatinghis crime. There were differentkinds ofpenaltiesandHannibalhad aconsiderablerepertoire ofquirkyideas.WhenWilltookone of them, hewould forgive him. Fully.

If not …

Love was a double-edged sword.

"Will!"

"No!" Will shouted and the psychiatrist could see how terribly hard this answer was for him. "No, I'm tired to fight it. I have enough." He looked at him with these heavenly blue eyes and Hannibal saw the shadows underneath. The reddened skin he had not noticed that much in the pouring rain before. He was not quite sure how often and how much Will had cried since their dispute and during the boat ride and while he explored the harbor, but it must have been enormous. Maybe he had even suffered a breakdown in the midst of his depression and trapped it by himself. He was weak and strong and even strong when his own weakness

overwhelmed him and that was one of his values Hannibal had thought of consuming it like a treasure. He watched silently as the profiler swallowed before he started to speak again. His opposition and the rapidly resurgent violence had died as aquatic plants in the savannah of East Africa. “I love you.” His voice was barely a whisper, but remained firm. “Sometimes I hate to love you, but I **do** love you.”

Hannibal waited a few minutes, but no more words followed. Will was silent. He would have been too happy to kiss him right now, but he refused it for obvious reasons. Finally he sighed. It seemed there was just one thing left to do.

“If that’s the case, you’ll leave me no choice either I guess ... “ His face twisted into a grimace of tortured melancholy.

Will stared at him in confusion, blinking back the tears that dared to to form in the cornerof his eyes.

“What do y-“ he wanted to ask, but the words stuck in his throat as Hannibal freed his aching wrists, and went into a crouch, pulling a purple velvet studded, mouse large box out of his pocket.

“What...whatare you – oh God, no. Please Hannibal, no -” Will stammered, butthevery finetremorin his voiceannouncedfromirritationanda vagueideathat costhim all oftheremainingcontrol, he was still ready to boast.

It did not disturb Hannibal. He remained in his position, one leg kneeling to stabilize himself on the creaking floor, the other bent. Yet he took the time to close his eyelids for a moment to gather his thoughts and to take a deep breath that should offer his plan a smooth curve. Then he opened his eyes and linked them with Will’s azure blue view. When he was sure that the profiler would not turn away from him, he split his lips. *They were unusually dry* he would think later.

“William Graham, “ he began, clearing his throat, opened the small box and presented a silver shining engagement ring, garnished with a strip of sparkling topaz and sapphires. Stones whose flawless blue reached agreement in absolute harmony with Will's eyes. He had accidentally discovered it in the display case of a jeweler, as he had been looking for a new watch and bought it immediately. “Will you marry me?”

Will stood so stiff that Hannibal was afraid he would fall in a swoon to the rear and plunge straight as a board next to the table.
He stood up and walked precautionly one step ahead in order to save him in good time, but had to watch as Will simultaneously took a step back as he approached him. This behavior made him mad, but he did not show it. He still had to hide some scratches and dents of this night behind his clothed mask.

“You would have followed me on the goddamn sea, only to make me a fucking proposal?” Will croaked out after some time. “Only to ask me if I want to wear your last name?”

Hannibal bowed his head.

“Well ... yes. Primarily, however, I wanted to bring you home .”

Will laughed suddenly and stroked with the flat palm over his face. The laughter was choppy and short, almost gasping. There was no spark of humor in it. There was torment in this laughter.

“And now an engagement ring is your bait to pull me ashore again, hm? Me, the fish that escaped from your aquarium?” Will laughed even louder, almost hysterical. “Banal, Dr. Lecter. Very, very banal.”

Hannibal was not in mood to laugh, but he did not prevent it.

“I'd rather say it’s long overdue.” he said. “I already wanted to ask this question about five hours ago. After supper.”

“Somehow, this question sounds still pretty corny. Be honest.” Will said. It should probably sound sarcastic, but his baritone was suddenly very dry. Very scratchy. As if the oxygen would have completely passed from his lungs.

Hannibal smiled thinly. He saw the partly demanding, partly bewildered, partly resolved discrepant expression painted on Will’s facial features, the feelings reflected in his gently dilated pupils. And he liked what he saw. The fact that Will had called him Doctor again, desperately trying to simulate a further distance, merely gave him insight about the chaos he had caused inside the young man by using a few simple words. Again. To have this groundbreaking effect on another person, a person whom he intended to have his heart and soul, gave him a sense of deeper and more impressive ... satisfaction.

“The question is traditional.” he said. “But the answer is crucial. How is yours?“

He watched as Will's Adam's apple bopping up while he swallowed nervously. Saw the throbbing vein bulging on his throat, the white skin of his stubbly cheeks, pouring a reddish glow in the fresh. He would have preferred to let his lips wander over this vein now, tasting the soft flesh between his teeth while his hands roamed over every inch of skin he could reach. But he practiced in patience. He was not an unruly barbarian and would it not be this night. He would inhale Will as he was 20 years aged wine and lick him up till the last drop, would feast on him, again and again. All in time. He had never regretted the wait. He had been a patient man since time was invented. A patient lover. And a patient hunter. A patient hunter with a certain goal.

Slowly, almost apathetic, he leaned forward, taking the ring from the box. With a self-evident that one could have envied him for, he took Will's left hand and put the ring on his finger. Will did nothing to hinder nor stop him. He still seemed paralyzed, but also strangely ... relieved. As Hannibal had given him a certainty that had been lacking up to this point. Confirmation. A delicious safety.

They looked at each other. Long. Will moved the finger on a trial basis. Prophylactically. The ring didn’t slip. It fitted like a glove.

“It fits.” he said, sounding incredulous and stunned.

Hannibal nodded.

“Of course.” he said. He smiled. “You belong to me as this ring belongs on your finger.”

He wedged his fingers coarser than usual in the chestnut curls. Tilting up his bare throat he directed the profiler’s head backwards, leaving him vulnerable and helpless. A delicate taste of the punishment that would follow. But he was convinced it would be a punishment with pleasure.
Will responded with a tiny gasp, looked at his opponent with a hint of curiosity. Hannibal licked his mouth, whether unconsciously or not, remained unknown. Then he leaned forward.

He forced Will not in the impending kiss.
This would have meant a counterproductive endeavor. His lips hovered millimeters in front of his own without really touching. The mere idea was enough to increase the tension between them.
“I'm afraid you're slightly cold, my dear.” he whispered, blew his breath on Will’s parted mouth. You should get rid of your wet clothes. I don’t want you to get sick.” He let the profiler a minute out of sight, appeared to pick up in the gray-blue mist under without air. Will met his intense gaze. “Will you help me?” he asked the psychiatrist with an innocence, bordering on blasphemy. Hannibal answered by ripping his shirt in half with a careless movement and pinched a rosy nipple, forcing Will to make a hissing sound. The other hand slipped among the interfering substance, traveled over his spine in meticulous care. The profiler shuddered. To top this off the psychiatrist grabbed him unceremoniously under his knees and heaved him onto the table **so** that he lay on his back in no time. The empty box swept silently to the ground. Hannibal was upon him, a shield, a blanket, a heavy, hot pulsating weight and pressed him down with vehemence. And the worst? He had already missed it. Feverishly missed.
Nevertheless, a crucial thing was left open and it gave him no peace.

“S-Stop, don’t you want to know my response first? “ Will asked by surprise and had to get a hold on Hannibal's shoulders.

“I already know.” Hannibal replied and kissed him on the forehead. Then on the stubbly cheek. Then on the mouth and there he remained definitely longer. Will rolled his eyes.

“Presumptuous till the end.” he muttered teasingly, but smiled. He was in a trance. All of this, the table below him, the house, the harbor, the storm, the sea, Hannibal Lecter demanding on him - it was like a dream soaked in opium from which he intended not to wake up.
Hannibal bit in the soft skin of the profiler’s throat just below the jugular vein. A mark, in addition to the ring.

“If that's my vice, it shall be.” he surmised.

“It wouldn’t be your only vice, darling.” Will replied dryly, groaned and nibbled on Hannibal's earlobe. “You didn’t need to kill her. She was an annoying spitfire, but no serious

danger.” he whispered.
“She was rude to you. Very often. You can not say she hadn’t put my patience to the test. I just wanted to give you pleasure.” the psychiatrist argued without remorse. “And who dares to offend my fiance will be sprinkled with parsley and put into the oven. This is one of the simple joys of my everyday life. And it will soon be yours too. In *our* everyday life.” He kissed his path down the smooth skin of Will’s chest, undid the last buttons and pulled the shirt to the side. “How would you feel about a wedding in spring? Write-offs would be no problem, I have a few influential contacts in the church ...”
Will broke out into hysterical laughter, turning all too quickly into a moan as Hannibal's hand went under his waistband and brought back some redness heat in the white cheeks. Hadn’t he said something about a *warm up* before? This remark seemed now to take revenge.

“You’re horrible.” he said, cupped Hannibal distinctive face in his palms and grinned. Grinned, kissed him, grinned again, because he did not know how to come to terms with the course of events otherwise. All this was so grotesque and beautiful and ugly that it held the end of inky black humor. “You’re absolutely horrible. I don’t even want to think about what happens to the person who spoils our wedding cake.”

Now it was Hannibal’s turn to grin. His mouth turned so wide that it bared his sharp gleaming canines giving him a demonic shade.

“You should know better, Will. Of course I’ll be the one to bake the cake.” A dangerous glint glowed in mahagony brown depths and devoured Will almost alive. “Using one or two of my secret ingredients.”

“Don’t you dare!”

Chapter End Notes

Hey :3

Well well, in the end I couldn't let this turn out bad. The finale of Season 2 was heartbreaking enough so I wanted more happiness and Murder Husbands love^^'

As always, I'd appreciate kudos and comments very much!

If you want to read other Hannigram-fics of mine, feel free to click on my profile and look up my works, there are plenty of them ;3

Greets,
heart

End Notes

Hello :)

Well, did you liked it? Do you want to read some more?

Kudos will dry Hannibal's tears and comments will let me post the next chapter very VERY soon ;)

Greets,
heartofsnow

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!